



CALFED  
BAY-DELTA  
PROGRAM

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May 26, 1999

The Honorable Wally Herger  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2433 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Herger:

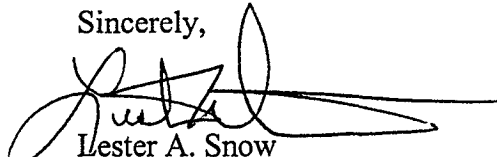
This is in response to your letter of March 28, 1999, forwarding a letter from Mr. Paul Johnston regarding the Rebber Plan for a salt water barrier in the Bay-Delta system.

You may be aware that barriers in the San Francisco Bay system to physically separate saline water of the bay from fresh water of the Delta have been proposed and studied many times since the late 1800s. The numerous barrier sites studied have ranged from a few miles upstream of the Golden Gate to Chipps Island. Bay barriers have been repeatedly rejected as inappropriate water management approaches. Large gate structures would be required to pass flood flows, and navigation locks would be needed to allow seagoing ships to reach the inland ports of Stockton and Sacramento. These locks, which would have to prevent upstream diversion of salts, would be complex and expensive and would be time-consuming for the passage of ships. Additionally, barriers have been judged to be functionally infeasible due to the uncertainty of water quality in the pool upstream of the barrier. Water quality in this pool would be compromised by upstream industrial and municipal waste discharges. From an environmental point of view, a major concern with barriers would be the loss of tidal action in the Delta, leading to concerns regarding fish protection and levee stability.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is working on an integrated approach to four interrelated resource areas: ecosystem restoration, water quality protection, water supply reliability, and levee system integrity. A salinity control barrier device may have merit as a method for increasing the quantity of water available for export from the Delta. However, salinity control barriers were not carried forward for further consideration in the CALFED Bay-Delta Program because these approaches would cause several significant detrimental effects, some of which are discussed above. We have concluded that salinity barrier proposals do not meet the multiple objectives of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

I hope this information is helpful. Please call me at (916) 657-2666 or Daniel McCarroll, CALFED legislative coordinator at (916) 653-5704, if you have further questions on this material.

Sincerely,



Lester A. Snow  
Executive Director

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**CALFED Agencies**

California    The Resources Agency  
                  Department of Fish and Game  
                  Department of Water Resources  
                  • California Environmental Protection Agency  
                  State Water Resources Control Board

Federal        Environmental Protection Agency  
                  Department of the Interior  
                  Fish and Wildlife Service  
                  Bureau of Reclamation  
                  U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture  
                  Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Department of Commerce  
                  National Marine Fisheries Service